MINISTRYPLACE | FREE PLANNING GUIDE

THE BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR'S ANNUAL MINISTRY PLANNER

Make a plan that includes your church,
your other work, and the people you love.

Start with the life you already have

This planner helps you see the whole year before you make more commitments. Use it on your own, then talk it through with your family and a trusted church leader.

What you will do

- Mark the dates and seasons you cannot move.
- Plan one quarter at a time, with room for work, family, and rest.
- Choose one ministry priority and name the support you need.
- Review the plan every three months and adjust it when life changes.

Print the pages or type in a PDF reader. Save a copy and share personal or family information only with their permission.

Start with what is fixed

Take 20 minutes to put the year on paper. Start with the current quarter.

1 | Gather your dates

Look at the church calendar, work schedule, school year, family commitments, vacation, and any regular time for rest.

2 | Mark busy seasons

Notice when your other job, a family responsibility, or a church season will need extra attention. Be honest about what can fit.

3 | Choose a priority

Use the one-big-thing page to name one ministry focus. A good plan can be explained to the people who will help carry it.

4 | Review and share

Ask your family and a trusted church leader what you missed. Put a 20-minute review on the calendar at the end of each quarter.

My planning year begins / next check-in:

A year at a glance

Enter the dates you already know. Pencil in the rest later.

Church anchors: Easter, Christmas, meetings, or events

Work anchors: busy seasons, deadlines, travel, or shifts

Family and personal anchors: commitments, vacation, appointments, and rest

Training and support: peer group, mentor, conference, or time with leaders

Dates we should protect before adding another activity

Quarter 1

January / February / March | Start with the dates and people already in your life.

Church: preaching, ministry focus, and fixed dates

Other work: busy weeks, travel, and known deadlines

Family and personal life: commitments, time off, and rest

Available margin: What needs to be simplified or moved?

One next step, who can help, and when to check in

Quarter 2

April / May / June | Start with the dates and people already in your life.

Church: preaching, ministry focus, and fixed dates

Other work: busy weeks, travel, and known deadlines

Family and personal life: commitments, time off, and rest

Available margin: What needs to be simplified or moved?

One next step, who can help, and when to check in

Quarter 3

July / August / September | Start with the dates and people already in your life.

Church: preaching, ministry focus, and fixed dates

Other work: busy weeks, travel, and known deadlines

Family and personal life: commitments, time off, and rest

Available margin: What needs to be simplified or moved?

One next step, who can help, and when to check in

Quarter 4

October / November / December | Start with the dates and people already in your life.

Church: preaching, ministry focus, and fixed dates

Other work: busy weeks, travel, and known deadlines

Family and personal life: commitments, time off, and rest

Available margin: What needs to be simplified or moved?

One next step, who can help, and when to check in

This year's one big thing

Choose one priority you can explain to your church and return to during the year.

The one ministry priority we will focus on:

Why this matters to our people and community:

What progress would look like by the end of the year:

The first small action, its owner, and a realistic date:

Who needs to be involved or asked for support?

What will we postpone or stop to make room?

A fictional example

Use the example to start a conversation, then make the plan your own.

The pastor

Jamie serves a church of 40 and works full time in a local business. Fall is the busiest season at work.

Fixed commitments

Jamie marks Easter, the church business meeting, school dates, a family vacation, and two months of longer work hours.

One big thing

Develop two approved backup worship leaders so Jamie can take a Sunday away each quarter. The board agrees to help identify and support them.

First steps

In January, Jamie asks the board chair to help. In February, they invite two people. In March, they schedule training and a first Sunday to serve.

A realistic adjustment

Because work is busiest in the fall, Jamie leaves the outreach calendar lighter and checks in with family before agreeing to another event.

Quarterly review

At the end of March, June, September, and December, Jamie and the board chair ask what has happened, what needs help, and whether the next step still fits.

Quarterly check-in

Set aside 20 minutes. Include anyone who shares responsibility for the decisions.

What went well? What are we grateful for?

What changed at church, at work, or at home?

Which commitment is too heavy or no longer fits?

What progress did we make on our one priority?

Who needs help, a conversation, or a clear handoff?

What will we keep, change, or stop before the next review?